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ABSTRACT

This second part of a two-part report is based on preliminary findings of an investigation into the recent decline in newspaper reading among young adults approximately 18 to 24 years old. It presents more then 50 hypotheses for the decline, derived from the findings of the investigation, documents them with verbatim quotes from members of the three source groups polled in the investigation--personnel in the publishing industry, experts in such fields as sociology and education, and young people--and examines the hypotheses in the light of data derived from other studies. The hypotheses are grouped according to the following topical categories: "A Look at the Youth Market," "The Social Environment--Major Demographic Trends," "Competition from Television," "The Newspaper Habit," "The Industry and the Product," "Life Styles," and "If You Were a Publisher, How Would You Get Young People to Read a Newspaper?" (GW)

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YOUNG PEOPLE AND NEWSPAPERS

An Exploratory Study

Part II

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THE REPORT

The report is divided into two parts.

Part I covers the Introduction, the Research Plan, the Overview and the Summary of the Hypotheses.

Part II is organized around specific hypotheses and includes the following individual sections:

Section I	A Look at the Youth Market
Section II	The Social Environment - Major Demographic Trends
Section III	Competition from Television
Section IV	The Newspaper Habit
Section V	The Industry and the Product
Section VI	Life Styles
Section VII	If You Were A Publisher, How Would You Get Young People To Read A Newspaper

Throughout the report, we have attempted to integrate some of the verbatim quotes from our three sources -- young people, the experts and the industry -- both as documentation and to give the reader the full flavor of the responses.

DEFINITIONS

To the extent possible, we have attempted to follow standard definitions used in the newspaper industry to describe readership:

A Regular Reader -	A person who has read the paper yesterday.
A Frequent Reader -	A person who has read the paper several times in the last week.
A Nonreader -	More aptly described as an occasional reader -- reads a daily newspaper no more than once a week.
A Sunday Only Reader -	Only reads the Sunday paper but reads it at least twice a month.
A Young Reader/ Nonreader -	A young man or women-18 to 24 years of age, unless otherwise identified as between the ages of 18 to 34.

I: A LOOK AT THE YOUTH MARKET

Concern about the youth market is manifest throughout the industry. Indeed, at the most recent meeting of the American Society of Newspaper Editors in Washington, D.C., 1/ a recent study released there indicated that one out of four editors who singled out declining circulation as the major problem of the industry, said that the 18 to 30 year old population is the most serious part of the problem.

Yet, there are also grounds for dispute on the nature, character and direction of the problem. Several different theories have been advanced by the publishers and editors who cooperated in this initial study.

.... The first, and most popular is that declining penetration among young people is part and parcel of a general pattern -- and does not represent any unique threat.

.... The second, and almost equally popular theory, is that the problem with young readers has been around for a long time but eventually is resolved by the maturation process -- with young people coming into the market as they settle down, get married, buy homes and have children.

.... A third theory advanced by some of the industry is that the situation is not universal -- but rather is true of certain types of young people or those living in particular types of communities. Among those singled out as the key to the problem are college educated young men and women, and ghetto and suburban youth.

With these three theories in mind, we examined the available data.

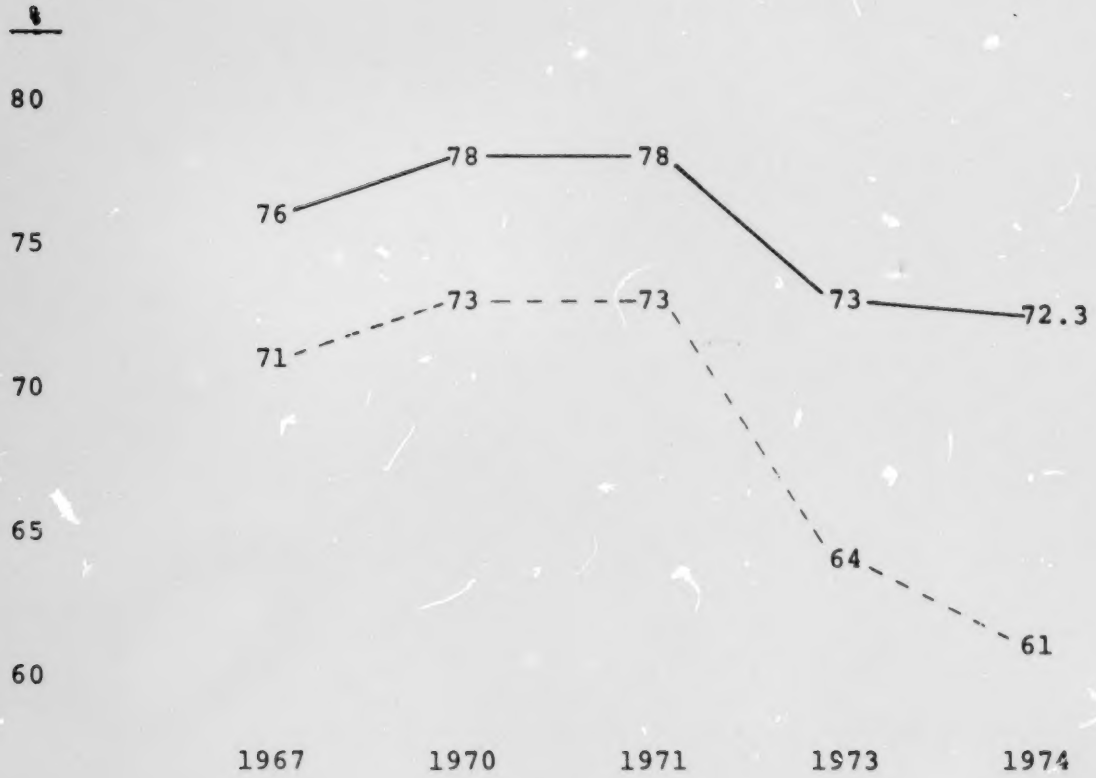
Hypothesis #1: The youth market represents a special problem for the industry.

While newspaper readership has declined over the past decade for the entire population, the drop off has been particularly precipitous among younger people.

According to figures from W.R. Simmons, 2/ average weekday penetration for all adults, 18 years of age and over, has declined from 76% in 1967 to 72.3 in 1974, or a net decline of less than 4%. Among young people, the decline has been 10% during this same period.

DAILY NEWSPAPER READERS*

(Average Issue - Weekday Only)



* Source: W.R. Simmons annual "Study of Selected Markets and the Media Reaching Them"

Looked at from a different perspective, the urgency of the problem becomes even more acute.

Taking into account the post World War II baby boom, if newspaper readership among young adults had remained at the 71% level, rather than declining to 61%, right now there would be 2,500,000 more young daily newspaper readers.

Hypothesis #2: The decline in newspaper circulation among young people is a temporary or transitional one. Once they settle down and get married, buy homes and have children, they will become readers just like previous generations did.

This hypothesis was advanced by several of the editors and publishers and a few of the experts.

> "It seems to me that we don't get newspaper readers until they reach the point where they acquire a household, whether they are living together or married and have to make discretionary buying decisions."

> "College age young people have never been real newspaper readers. Students don't have the time or the interest. Other young people only read them because they are living at home and the papers are available. When they settle in, they begin to become readers."

> "....regardless of age, when a couple begins living together, in or out of wedlock, and they need to buy furniture or check the movie schedule or groceries or whatever, then they will turn to a newspaper."

Only a longitudinal study in which the same young people are tracked over time can provide definitive information on this theory. To the best of our knowledge, at this time, there is no such study available.

However, if we use the W.R. Simmons data [3/] to follow the 18 to 24 year old cohort from 1967 to 1974 when they were 25 to 21 years old, there are no indications that this group started to read at higher levels. Instead, in 1974 the 25 to 34 year olds were reading at precisely the same levels as the 18 to 24 year olds were in 1967.

DAILY NEWSPAPER READING

Among Young People

	18 to 24 years old	25 to 34 years old
1967	71%	76%
1974	61%	71%

The big question for the industry is: Unless the trend is reversed, what will the cohort picture show some seven years from now?

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DAILY NEWSPAPER READING

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1974	61%	71%

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POTENTIAL TRENDS

DAILY NEWSPAPER READING AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE

	18 to 24 years old	25 to 34 years old
1974	61%	71%
1981	51%	61 - 66%

Another question which can be raised is: "What about the next cohort in a period of prolonged adolescence and delayed marriage?" Here, again, there is no longitudinal data -- but only figures on which one can make logical assumptions.

At best, available data does not show any great surge of readers in the 35 to 49 year old audience -- but rather a slightly slowed down rate of decline.

READERSHIP - ALL DAILIES - BY AGE[4/]

1970 - 1973

	Net change 1970/1973
Total adults - 18+	-5%
18 - 24 year olds	-9%
25 - 34 year olds	-7%
35 - 49 year olds	-5%
50 - 64 years old	0%
65 years old +	+1%

What do young people say:

> "I think a lot of people are going to be in for some big surprises when my generation hits 35 ... we're still not like our parents. They keep moving up the magic line -- 25...30...35. Soon it will be 40."

Hypothesis #3: The decline in readership among young people is particularly acute among one or two demographic groups -- rather than across the board.

Two groups of young people are singled out by members of the industry as representing the heart of the problem.

Several suggested that it was the more affluent college educated young person -- the spillover of the college revolution of the sixties who were the main defectors. Others felt that television had caused the greatest disaffection from newspapers among ghetto blacks and blue collar young people.

Without national figures, we have examined the results from relatively comparable figures for five major markets -- all of which show the same pattern of general decline in newspaper reading among all young people -- with the sharpest dip occurring among the college educated and the lowest income groups.

Metropolitan versus Nonmetropolitan

Another thesis advanced is that declining newspaper readership among young people is primarily a metropolitan area problem -- but here hard data indicates that the reverse is the case.

WEEKDAY READERSHIP AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE

18 - 24 YEARS OLD 5/

	METROPOLITAN AREAS	NONMETROPOLITAN AREAS
1970	75%	80%
1971	75%	68%
1973	65%	63%
Net change 1970/1973	-10%	-17%

Men versus women

Information released by the Television Advertising Bureau indicates that the fall-off in newspaper readership is greater among young women than among young men.

NEWSPAPER READERSHIP

AMONG 18 - 35 YEAR OLDS 6/

	Women	Men
1970	69%	70%
1975	62%	69%
Net difference 1970/1975	-7%	-1%

With its greater access to intra-industry information, the Research Committee of the ANPA will be in a better position to target the specific problem groups among young people.

What is clear from even this preliminary examination is that age alone does not make young people a homogenous sector -- and that differences -- demographic and nondemographic -- are as important as the general problem to both future investigations and strategy planning.

II: THE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT AND DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

Many of the publishers, editors and experts pointed to changing demographic trends in the country as the major source of the problem -- declining marriage rates; delayed marriages; childless couples; increases in the divorce rates; increased mobility; increases in apartment house living, etc.

> "One of the problems is the demographic changes that have occurred in recent years; a higher proportion are attending college and they are staying in college longer; fewer are getting married or they are marrying later, marrieds have always been better newspaper readers than singles. Fewer young people are having children, couples who are tied to the home and have more time to read the newspapers."

> "There are two related problems in the 18 to 30 age group; high geographic mobility and high career mobility. These and other demographic changes result in rootlessness."

> "Another element that could have some impact on nonnewspaper readership is the fact that many young adults seem to be delaying the formation of a family unit."

We have examined each of these suggested trends -- not in the interests of verifying existing information, but rather to identify those correlates which seem worthy of much more extensive review -- either to verify the correlation or to determine what

types of products, packaging, and distribution changes are necessary to meet a changed demographic map.

In this section, too, we have wrestled with a major concept advanced by many of the publishers: that an intrinsic factor in the situation is lowered reading skills.

Hypothesis #4: The erosion of the traditional family unit is a significant factor in declining newspaper readership.

One of the factors which has traditionally been highly related to newspaper readership is the stable family unit. For example, the Newspaper Advertising Bureau's Youth Study of 1971 indicates that young people who are married are about 20% more likely to have read a newspaper "yesterday" than those young people who are unmarried.

Our own studies [7] show that familism as a value among young people has declined continuously since the mid-sixties and the demographic data shows the same evidence in life.

Single People Households

There has been a strong trend for single people to be heads of households and to live alone, as opposed to living in a family.

HOUSEHOLD STATUS OF SINGLE PEOPLE 25 - 34 [8]

	1975	1970	Difference
Heads of housholds	43.4%	32.7%	+10.7%
Heads of households living alone	28.5%	21.2%	+ 7.3%
Heads of households living in families	45.1%	55.5%	-10.4%

Delayed Marriage

A major trend away from the traditional family pattern is the trend towards delaying the first child among married couples. In 1965, only 28% of the married couples between 20 and 24 years of age were childless. By 1975, that figure had risen to 42.8%.9/

There has been an expansion of the percentage of 20 to 24 year olds who are single, especially among females.

PERCENT SINGLE (NEVER MARRIED) 10/

	Male	Female
1960	53.1%	28.4%
1970	54.7%	35.8%
1975	59.9%	40.3%

There has been an increase in the divorce rate among young people. However, the divorce rate is so low among people under 30 that the changes that have occurred are not very substantial.

DIVORCE RATE 11/

20 - 24 year olds

1970		1975	
Males	Females	Males	Females
1.1%	2.3%	1.4%	3.5%

25 - 29 year olds

1970		1975	
Males	Females	Males	Females
2.3%	4.4%	4.2%	6.5%

Certainly the statistics point to a "new" marketplace among young people -- and validation that traditional products are not necessarily geared to the interests or needs of a new generation. What they also suggest, however, is a whole new order of information needs and distribution patterns generated by changed life styles which need to be studied and tracked.

Hypothesis #5: Declining newspaper readership among young people is linked to the increase in apartment dwelling units nationally.

Several of the editors and publishers suggested that declining newspaper readership among young people was linked to the apartment house dweller problem -- another serious concern of the newspaper industry.

Yet, while apartment house orientation and distribution may account for the next cohort group, it does not really explain the situation among young readers, simply because in the past they have never lived in their own homes.

Percentage of Owner Occupied Housing Units Occupied by Owner Under 30 Years of Age 12/

	1970	1973	1974
Total Housing Units (000's)	68,679	75,293	78,094
Under 25	1.1%	1.6%	1.5%
25 - 29	3.3%	3.7%	3.8%

Hypothesis #6: The increased number of working women is related to declining readership among young people.

Still another major trend suggested as a cause for declining newspaper readership among young people is the increased participation by young women in the labor force. There can be no question that this increase has occurred.

LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATE AMONG YOUNG WOMEN [13/]

Ages	1960	1970	1974
16 - 19	39.0%	43.7%	49.0%
20 - 24	46.1%	57.5%	63.0%

Yet the correlation between working women and declining readership is harder to prove. On the one hand, there are the figures provided by the Television Advertising Bureau[14/] which suggests that readership decline is primarily a female problem -- but other Yankelovich research and the response of the young working women who participated in our groups strongly refutes any suggestion that working women are less likely to read newspapers.

A 24 year old secretary:

> "Now that I am working, I'm more a part of the world and I've got a greater need for a newspaper. People around me are talking about the news; I've got more money to spend so I follow the ads more -- just things like that."

A 29 year old supermarket checker:

> "We started to get the paper delivered. It's my way of keeping up. I can't count on word-of-mouth so much any more. It's like I've got to budget my time -- and the newspaper is part of my budget."

Yankelovich surveys, in general, indicate that working women are more active and involved than nonworking women. They are more likely, for example, to participate in sports, do physical exercise, take courses, and read magazines and books, and as likely to have hobbies and other interests as housewives.

Hypothesis #7: Residential mobility is a factor in declining newspaper readership.

Most industry research substantiates the fact that newspaper readership is conversely tied to residential mobility. You have to live in an area for a while before you are interested enough to read about it. Newcomers are often nonreaders.

Given this fact there has been some speculation that the decline in newspaper readership among young people may be due to their greater residential mobility.

There has been an increase in residential mobility rates among the 25 - 29 age group in recent years. In 1970, twenty-one percent of this age group were living in the same house as they had been for the previous five years. By 1975, that figure had dropped to 16.8%.

SAME HOUSE AS FIVE YEARS EARLIER 15/
(25 - 29)

1970	21.6%
1975	16.8%

Hypothesis #8: Increased college enrollments are temporarily responsible for lowered newspaper reading among young people.

It is hard to find a newspaper editor or publisher who has a "good word" to say about selling newspapers to a college community:

> "College students just don't read newspapers."

> "College kids have too many other activities, too little time, no great concern with history on a day-to-day basis, and no great belief that any solutions found in the newspaper are any good anyway."

From this viewpoint, the expansion of college enrollments undoubtedly tends to exacerbate the problem.

In 1960, only 13% of the 20 to 24 year olds were enrolled in college; by 1971 that figure had risen to nearly 22%.

Hypothesis #9: Increased educational attainment and affluence should be operating for, not against, increased youth readership.

Although we have concentrated on trends which tend to undermine the traditional place of the newspaper, there are two related trends which should be working to strengthen readership, namely the increase in affluence and the increase in educational attainment. These two factors which have traditionally been related to high newspaper readership appear to be outweighted by other trends and value systems which are strongest in this upscale group.

MEDIAN INCOME 16/

	1959	1970	1974
14 - 24 years of age	$4,270	$7,294	$9,151
25 - 34 years of age	$5,855	$10,167	$13,294

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT 17/

	1959	1970	1974
Adults 25 years old +			
Median years of school completed	10.3	12.2	12.3

Hypothesis #10: Reading ability is down. People can't read as well as before, and, therefore, are less likely to read newspapers than previously.

This hypothesis arose quite frequently. It seemed to emerge from reports about declining scores on the verbal ability test of the College Board. Certainly it is not a subject which can be handled within the context of this study -- for there is both a great deal of conflicting data and interpretations of the data.

Our own cursory examination of this situation turned up several pieces of evidence which at least suggests that declining reading skills, at best, can be only a minor contributory factor in the drop-off in newspaper reading among young people.

1. Most of the interpretations of the College Board verbal SAT scores are based on the changing pool of test takers. When the Board's own estimate of average SAT scores is applied to all students (not just those taking the College Boards) there is evidence of a short term, but not a long term, decline.

ESTIMATED SAT-VERBAL SCORE AVERAGES FOR ALL 11th GRADERS IN OCTOBER 18/

	Male	Female	Total
1960	336	348	342
1966	353	362	358
1974	344	343	343

2. A similar conclusion is reached by Paul Heusing of the Psychological Corporation in his analysis of recent research on standardizing a new version of the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children. 19/ His conclusion is that the research strongly suggests that the general measurable (verbal) ability level increased between 1949 and 1974 for children between six and fifteen years of age.

3. A theory advanced by a leading expert on reading is that reading levels have not changed -- but that newspapers have become harder to read, both in terms of language and style.

4. Several of the publishers themselves felt that this argument was a cop-out -- pointing to the fact that some of the papers with the largest share of young readers were often in cities where the quality of education has been under sharpest attack.

5. Strong proponents of the reading skill theory, on the other hand, strongly advocate that the present teachers and school administrations are at the root of the problem.

> "Teachers and school administrators, following the lead of the University of Chicago, Peabody and John Dewey, are turning out more teachers and administrators, a) to whom reading and writing means little; and b) who themselves are not as good at reading-writing as was the generation before them and the generation before that. It is a self-sustaining and declining spiral."

6. A major college's president agreed that many of his students enter the university with a reading ability well below that needed for a college education -- but on the other hand, more than adequate for reading newspapers, the underground press, youth, ethnic and counterculture literature.

Hypothesis #11: Regardless of reading skill scores and educational deficiencies, young people continue to read. The difference is what they read.

Three other significant trends cannot be overlooked in the "reading ability" explanations for declining newspaper reading among young people.

1. The explosion in the sale of paperback books.
2. The success of the many new magazines oriented towards a younger audience.
3. The growth of the alternative press.

1. Paperbacks

From 1967 to 1972, the quantity of paperbacks produced in the United States more than doubled:

	Total Paperbacks
1967	148.6 million
1972	385.6 million

Rather than being nonreaders, young people account for a disproportionate amount of the books bought. A recent study by W.R. Simmons, reported in the New York Times, indicates that "age does not mitigate against reading". Eighteen to 24 year olds who constitute 17.6% of the population purchase 24.6% of the books sold.

2. Special Interest Magazines and "Youth" Publications

Arguing against the nonreading trend has been the success demonstrated by special interest magazines and the news weeklies for attracting young people. Good examples of this are the demographic profiles of such publications as: People, Psychology Today, Rolling Stone, Money and Apartment Life. The Village Voice in New York City would be another example of "young people reading".

3. The Alternative Papers

According to the New York Times 20/, the most successful of the "alternative papers" are the Real Paper and The Phoenix in Boston. In addition, they report that: "there are plenty of such papers around the country, both veteran survivors of the counterculture boom of the 1960's and newer ones that sprung up in the 1970's." According to its editor, the Real Paper gets about 50 such papers in exchange subscriptions from the Bay Guardian in San Francisco to Figaro in New Orleans, Iconoclast in Dallas, and weeklies based in college towns -- Tempe, Arizona (New Times); Austin, Texas (The Sun); and Athens, Georgia (The Observer). By an overwhelming margin, the editors of the nontraditional papers "put down" the reading theory. According to them it is content, relevance, language, availability, interest in self versus interest in news.

III: COMPETITION FROM TELEVISION

Today the industry is faced with the first real television generation -- young people to whom network television has been an integral part of their daily lives since infancy.

The subject is vast and complex -- and has in the past, is now, and will in the future continue to preoccupy experts in many fields and from many different viewpoints -- including the psychologists, sociologists, political scientists, political sociologists, and of course the newspaper industry itself.

In the course of this "hypothesis" exploration, editors and publishers -- and many of the experts -- pointed to many of the basic and underlying questions where solid information is needed:

... the effect of television on reading skills

.. the development of impressionistic communication

... dependence on visual and sensory rather than intellectual responses

. . the development of the left versus the right brain lobe

... the socialization and politicalization effects of television.

These very fundamental questions are causing great soul searching among some members of the industry.

To begin with, I am appalled at the lack of solid research. For the first time in history, an entire generation of TV-reared children is moving through adulthood. It is a phenomenon with simply extraordinary implications. And yet we have very little scientific evidence about it. We already are beginning to see many of the symptoms in personal behavior, social behavior, political behavior, and even international behavior.

One of the core elements, I think, is a rather striking trend toward impressionistic communication. Watch a modern movie with its stream of images, evoking feelings, emotions, and then reactions with little or no significant verbal communication -- no structure or form.

There is some evidence that young TV-reared people can get much more out of these visual images, out of colors, and sounds, than more verbally reared people. They are like blind people who become much more acutely aware of sounds. They are able to deliver and receive messages through a series of impressions which do not have to be translated into words. As a corollary, although the research is lacking, one would assume that these TV-people are governed more by feelings than by ideas.

Visual orientation:

> "We are now dealing with a 'television generation' for whom TV has occupied more hours than the school classroom. Its members are accustomed to assimilating information from television ... as reading ability declines ...television becomes an even more appealing alternative."
>
> "Television is at the bottom of it all (declining readership). ...It is the path of least resistance..."
>
> "...television has a great deal to do with it... people have become more visually oriented..."
>
> "Do young adults prefer TV and radio over newspapers for fast and immediate news without the effort of reading? This age group, having been spoon fed with television during the later fifties and sixties, may be seeking this push-button role of the electronic media. They may want to keep time and energy expended on becoming informed at a minimum."

Available information on the subject needs to be assembled and put into some assimilated and useful form.

Further research -- in the laboratory, in the university, through experimental designs and survey methodology -- will undoubtedly be needed.

Our own starting point in this first phase has been more mundane -- but nonetheless we believe essential. Television news is here to stay -- and newspapers will have to learn to

compete more effectively with it for the attention of young people.

Hence, we have attempted to gain some insights and initial hypotheses on the most visible dimensions of the situation:

... Does more television viewing time mean less newspaper reading time?

... Is the confidence level in newspaper reporting equivalent to that of television news reporting?

... What are the special appealing qualities of television reporting for young people which can be applied to newspapers?

... Do young people see television and newspapers as competitors and/or partners?

Hypothesis #12: Watching television need not represent a threat but rather a corollary to newspaper reading.

In addition to the industry, most of the experts in this study also saw television as representing a threat to newspaper reading among young people.

The Experts Speak

> "Young people get their news in headline form on TV."
>
> "...the spread of TV news from a few minutes to a couple of hours has affected newspaper readership."
>
> "...books and newspapers don't match TV for excitement..."
>
> "The young are active and mobile, they catch the TV news and grab a weekly news magazine and other specialized publications."
>
> "Many young people have the remarkable ability of monitoring television while doing something else, a feat you can't really accomplish while reading the daily newspaper."
>
> "Young people may want to keep time and energy expended on becoming informed at a minimum. The way to do that, of course, is to watch TV while doing something else."

Yet the responses of the young people suggest a somewhat different pattern -- one in which television can be a spur or accompaniment to newspaper reading:

> "I get the headlines from television -- then I look to see the details in the paper."
>
> "I get a lot of impressions from television -- but somehow the story becomes clearer with reading them."
>
> "There is something permanent about the printed word. Once it is in print, you can't take it back."

The problem as explained by some young people is the duplication of news rather than a system in which one medium should supplement the other:

> "Newspapers act like there is no such thing as television. They think headlines are what grab you when you have already heard them five times on radio and television."

Statistics

What do statistics show?

First there is a recent study conducted for the American Sociological Association which indicates that heavy television viewers among 18-24 year olds (five hours or more) are only slightly less likely than light viewers (less than two hours a day) to read a newspaper daily.

NEWSPAPER READING BY TELEVISION VIEWING 21/

(Base: 18-24 year olds)

	Television Viewing Time		
	0-2 Hours Daily	3-4 Hours Daily	5 Hours Or More Daily
	%	%	%
Read a newspaper every day	54.1	49.3	47.4
Read less than every day	45.9	50.7	52.6

Yankelovich surveys indicate the following:

... Young people (18-30 years old) believe that they are more dependent on newspapers for information than they were several years ago, although the rate of dependence increase is not as great as that for television.

... Increased dependence on television news appears to tie in with a basic news need and hence engenders rather than limits dependence on newspapers.

DEPENDENCE ON MEDIA

COMPARED TO A FEW YEARS AGO 22/

	Net Difference: More/Less Than A Few Years Ago
	%
Television	+25
Radio	-10
Newspapers	+15

When the group who indicate greater versus less dependence on television are looked at separately, here is what the results suggest:

DEPENDENCE ON TV NEWS VERSUS NEWSPAPERS 23/

	Total	Depend On TV News More	Depend On TV News Less	Depend On TV News The Same
	%	%	%	%
Depend on Newspapers:				
More	30	40	30	20
Less	15	10	50	20
Same	55	50	20	60
Net Difference	+15	+30	-20	=

These figures, of course, require further verification -- but they at least suggest that there is room in a young person's life for both television and newspapers, providing each one has a unique and different role.

Hypothesis #13: A major appeal of television news which newspapers will have to meet is convenience in terms of packaging, summarization, simplicity, etc.

The young people singled out several aspects of television news which help to define the word "convenience". They are:

1. Conciseness: In every part of the country, young people pointed out the directness and conciseness of television news.

> "They really summarize, get to the point, single out the big stories."

> "Newspapers may be more thorough but you have to work your way through them. On television, it is there -- one, two, three, bang."

2. Timeliness: According to the young people, news on television is "fresh"; headlines in newspapers are often old news.

> "...television reports what is happening while it happens; newspapers tell you what is happening -- but after it happens."

3. Packaging: Young people also suggest that television has stolen the march on packaging and making the information selection process easier.

"...Take the NBC six o'clock news. They tell you what is coming up, and you can either watch or not watch. In newspapers you have to hunt and look -- even with an index."

4. Not a Primary Occupation: Curiously, most young people are very aware that they can do other things while watching television -- including reading newspapers. They are far less aware that they do other things while reading newspapers -- i.e., listening to radio, television, music, eating, etc.

A nonreader explains: "I don't miss a newspaper. It takes too much time. I can watch television while I eat."

"...you can do a lot of things while you're watching television -- like reading newspapers, looking at a book, ..."

"Television is less demanding ...you can listen and work, talk, sew, read, eat, cook, etc."

"You have to concentrate on a newspaper. Television goes in one ear and out the other and I still catch it. I don't have to take time."

Hypothesis #14: Diversity in Staff: Young people are more aware of diversity among television newscasters; they report seeing more young people, more women, more minority groups reporting news -- but don't have the same feelings about newsrooms or editors.

> "Just look what's happened to local television -- even national -- all women, mostly young, and the large number of minority groups represented in broadcasting and then look at the newspaper."

> "They still think of 'Dear Abby' as a young woman in the newspaper ...and most of the reporters are men ...They don't really give blacks a chance."

Hypothesis #15: Momentum: Young people are more aware of improvements in television news reporting than they are about changes in their local newspapers:

> "Television news has come a long way."
>
> "...television news seems to be more in tune with the times...they seem to try to improve their format and even their content."
>
> "...compared to papers, they seem to deal more with real issues, like what's happening to inflation or consumer safety -- and less with murders. One exception around here is the ten o'clock news which we call the 'horror hour.'"
>
> "Maybe its because they keep telling you how good they are -- but I am more aware of television news improvements than I am of the changes in my local paper."

Interestingly, more often than not, the young people in larger metropolitan areas, in speaking about improvements in news, were talking about the earlier news hours (5:00 P.M. to 7:00 P.M. in their own market rather than prime time (6:00 P.M. to 7:00 P.M.).

They also pointed out that "there seems to be more and more news on television" -- and here the figures bear out their thinking: In five major U.S. markets, there was an average of 43.8 hours of news a month available in 1970; by 1973 this figure had risen to 53.8 hours. 24/

Hypothesis #16: The Magazine Format: Young people are becoming increasingly aware of the "magazine" approach of television news, and they like it.

Over the past few years, television news executives -- wrestling with many of the same problems as the newspaper industry -- have moved with some rapidity to the news magazine formula: segments, sections, etc.

Our young people recognized this approach and appeared to like it:

> "Take ----- six o'clock news. It's like reading Time magazine. They have regular features on people, medicine, religion, life style, consumerism.....I think it is great."

Hypothesis #17: Excitement: Television news is more exciting.

An idea mentioned by only one young person -- an occasional reader -- is worthy of mention:

> "Newspapers are written in monotones. That's their style...except for headlines. On television, the language is more grabbing...there's tension, humor, sadness..."

Other young people mention:

> "livelier reporting"

> "more interesting, exciting subjects"

Hypothesis #18: Work versus Relaxation: Listening to television news is seen as relaxing; reading a newspaper is regarded as "work".

Even the newspaper fans among the young people seemed to agree with their peer who said:

> "TV is more relaxing. It's better than having to 'work at' reading a newspaper."

Or with the young working woman who reported:

> "I unwind to television -- even to the news. When I'm tired, I like to let it come at me. The newspaper is big, cumbersome, hard to read, the stories skip. It's hard 'work.'"

Aspects of the papers singled out as part of the "work" syndrome include:

... Bulk

... Language

... Skips

... Layout

... Small type

... Length of stories

... Long sentences

... Page size

Hypothesis #19: The Personal Touch: Young people find television news more personal.

Another "manageable" quality of television singled out by the young people is what they describe as "the people quality". Several of the groups pointed out that:

> "You get to know the newscasters and the personalities -- and it makes it more of a one to one thing; but newspapers are impersonal. You never feel like you know who's telling you the story."

> "I can describe every major television newscaster, local and national. Ask me about the editors or writers on my local paper and I draw a blank."

> "Newspapers never tell you to have a nice day.... they're cold and impersonal."

Hypothesis #20: Confidence: Young people's trust in television has increased while concern about bias in newspapers has increased.

While bias is one of the major criticisms young people make about newspapers, it was barely mentioned in connection with television.

Instead, in group after group, the young readers and nonreaders suggested that television news was "more open and unbiased than newspapers."

Other comments:

> "Television is not as politically biased. TV and radio have to give equal time."

> "I put more faith in news I see on television.... newspapers are not well-researched. They're one-sided. On television you can see the news taking place and come up with your own conclusions."

> "The TV has to report both sides of a question -- newspapers can or cannot."

A preliminary search of other available data supports the theory that young people trust TV more.

For example, over a period of ten years, the Roper organization asked people which medium they would trust the most in the case of conflicting reports. In 1963, half of the under 26 year olds chose television -- compared to only 40% of the next cohort group. By 1972, both groups chose television at the 55% level.

CHOICE OF TELEVISION IN THE CASE OF CONFLICTING REPORTS 25/

	1963	1972
	%	%
18 - 25 years of age	50	55
26 - 34 years of age	40	55

Hypothesis #21: A lot of television is "listened to" rather than "viewed."

No one can minimize the visual impact of television -- or the effects on millions of young people who "lived through" the Vietnam War, Watergate, the Kennedy funerals and Martin Luther King's assination on their television screens.

Yet, in a day-to-day competitive situation, there is also the fact that a lot of television news, according to the young people, is "listened to" rather than viewed.

A most dramatic example of this "listening" trend occurred in one of the group discussions held in the metropolitan New York area -- with the discussants young married suburban women. All of them were very excited about a live operation featured on one of the local television news channels the previous evening. The described their interest, involvement, grasp of details -- all easy to interpret as "visual" assets of television. In actual fact -- only one or two were near a television screen; the rest were out of sight of the screen -- busy in the kitchen -- and listening. What caught their attention: the subject matter; the verbal communications of the drama; intensity; plot line; detail; outcome. And according to the women all of this came across in a very brief time span.

This one incident is backed up by another definition of the convenience of television:

"You don't have to watch it."

IV: THE NEWSPAPER HABIT

Many interesting and different theories were raised about differences in the newspaper exposure and habits of today's young people.

All of them are relevant to the situation -- but not necessarily remedial. From the publishers:

> .... The turned-off generation of the sixties, now moving into the marketplace, didn't develop the newspaper habit in their early years.
>
> .... As children they watched television as a treat -- and read newspapers as homework.
>
> ... A more basic cause of the decline of reading in the homes is that millions of children now rarely see their parents reading anything.

In this section we have covered several of the most significant hypotheses on this subject which emerged from our conversations with young people as well as the subject of Newspapers in the Classroom Programs.

Hypothesis #22: No Role Model: The newspaper reading tradition in the family can no longer be counted as an industry asset. The newspaper habit has to be systematically developed among young people who do not have strong childhood associations with newspapers.

In listening to the remarks of the young people, it would seem as though very few of them started out as "solid" prospects for regular newspaper reading. Instead they suggest that:

> While they take television for granted, it was the biggest event in their parent's lives.
>
> "They bought the set for us kids -- but it was my parents who were the real television nuts."
>
> "I don't remember much talk about newspapers. We used to fight about watching my programs versus the news programs."
>
> "My parents took newspapers for granted. Not so with television."
>
> "My father used to tell me how in his house on Sunday they used to fight over the comics. My sister and I like them -- but not the same way."

Hypothesis #23: New Incentives For Early Reading: Comics and sports statistics -- and even games and puzzles are not enough to involve school-aged children.

The main reasons for early reading by young people now reading newspapers are:

ads, hobbies, high school sports, science, fashion and sex.

A few remarks provide the clues:

> "I liked to read the advice columns even as a kid."

> "I think most of the comics are dumb. I always did. I used to like the magazine sections on Sunday a lot better."

In thinking about writing for the pre-adult youth market, there are guidelines for the industry:

> .... The size, scope and buying power of the early teen-age market for products and the attention paid to it by consumer manufacturers.

> .... Its commitment to sports and music -- even at a young age.

> .... The sophistication of the group.

According to a recent Yankelovich survey, for example, 41% of the teen-age girls have smoked cigarettes; 27% have smoked marijuana, and 14% have had sexual intercourse by the time 26/ they are fifteen years old. Yet, they still represent a distinctive market with special interests and needs.

Hypothesis #24: Newspapers in the Classroom: There is not solid evidence that Newspapers in the Classroom (NIC) programs are accomplishing their goals.

If one cannot count on the parents to instill the newspaper reading habit, can one count on teachers? The educational system? The Newspapers in the Classroom program?

Here, again, we have come upon a subject which requires an extensive and intensive examination strictly on its own merits. For within the industry, we found both proponents and critics of the program -- as well as a diverse view of the objectives.

In this connection, the most comprehensive report on NIC programs which we discovered in the course of this project is in the Copley International Corporation's "Youth Research Program" (which discusses many of the motivations, purposes and results of the program).

Yet, even this excellent report is hampered by lack of hard quantitative data, time series or agreement by the industry on exactly what should be the criteria for measuring the success or failure of the program.

Are young people who are part of the Newspaper in the Classroom program more likely, less likely, or just about as likely to be reading a newspaper when they are twenty-five as nonparticipants.

This answer is needed.

V: THE INDUSTRY AND THE PRODUCT

In diagnosing the declining youth readership patterns young readers tended to pinpoint product deficiencies as the major factor in causing the chasm between newspapers and themselves. Their criticisms revolved around a variety of major counts:

1. Lack of relevance -- not enough attention to the interests, life style, needs of young people.

> "Young people are treated like features -- not like news."

2. Lack of communication -- newspapers don't know us, address us or understand us.

3. Image problems -- newspapers are seen as conventional and middle-aged -- written and edited for and by middle-aged people.

4. Bias -- many of the young people believe that newspapers are biased.

5. Dullness and sameness -- newspapers look the same everyday. There are no surprises.

6. Newspapers are hard work -- hard to read, hard to handle.... too big, bulky, hard to look at.

7. Newspapers are disorganized -- laid out for the convenience of the editor, not the reader.

8. Visual appeal -- young people look to newspapers for exciting graphics, color, something you can touch or feel.... elements now labelled as "missing."

9. Newspapers are cold, impersonal.

10. Previous appeals -- sport scores, comics are no longer adequate reasons for buying a paper -- especially among blue collar and black youth.

Among the nonreaders, other explanations, in particular, were underscored:

.... I don't need the paper for the headlines.

.... What else does it have to offer?

.... What makes it "my paper"?

.... I have other ways of keeping up with my interests -- and my peer groups.

.... I don't trust it.

.... They look down on my generation.

In this section, we have sought to document, through quotes, some of these feelings -- and to indicate the extent to which they are recognized or shared by the experts and the members of the industry. We have also devoted considerable attention to the comments and remarks of editors and publishers of the "alternative press" and special interest magazines.

To help the reader, we have divided the section into four parts:

A. Image Problems

B. The Generation Gap

C. Product Problems

D. Learning From Others

A. Image Problems

Hypothesis #25: Young people don't think of themselves as newspaper readers.

"Ride a bus and the people reading newspapers are usually middle-aged or older."

"We talk a lot about television shows when we're together -- but not about newspapers."

Hypothesis #26: The technological advances of newspapers are not part of the youth's image of the industry.

Even with probing, very few of the young people commented on the technological advances of newspapers. Instant communication was part of television; computerization only slightly recognized as a source of labor-management problems.

Hypothesis #27: The Middle-Aged "Look". The newspaper industry has an image problem with young people which could be alleviated through good communications and promotion.

When you ask young people to describe the people who work for newspapers -- such as editors, reporters, publishers -- the one word that comes through is "middle-aged".

No one mentions 39 year old publishers; 38 year old editors; young columnists -- or even young reporters. Indeed, the middle-aged old syndrome is so pronounced that it is going to take even more than Robert Redford in "All the President's Men" to change it.

The excitement, the vibrancy, the drama of the news room -- the participation of young women and minority groups -- is just not there when the young people describe the kinds of people who work for newspapers.

Hypothesis #28: Bias. The cynicism and disillusionment of the last ten years has affected every American institution, including the newspaper.

There is substantial concern among young people that large daily newspapers are biased -- that they don't present both sides of the issues. The problem of the perceived bias of newspapers is another area where there is relatively high consensus among our three groups. The awareness of the problem is not as great among editors and publishers, however, as it is among the experts and young people themselves.

For young people, bias emerges as one of the basic issues in declining circulation. In contrast to what they see as the biased and one-sided approach of newspapers, these young people proposed presenting both sides of the issues in an op-ed format.

The editors and publishers speak:

"Many younger adults mistrust deeply what journalism steadfastly adheres to as meretorious objectivity. To them, our 'objectivity' is veiled subjectivity on behalf of a system run by squares."

".... the format of newspaper editorials is probably outdated....we should investigate op-ed pages."

"Young people no longer trust papers the way their parents did."

The experts speak:

"Young people are pretty cynical now....pretty skeptical...."

"....alternative weeklies succeed because the audience believes what we write..."

"Young people are likely to find bias when they don't see their news, their interests, their point of view reflected."

The young people speak:

> "....if you read a paper and try to believe anything about politics, you're wasting your time."

> "....I put more faith in news I see on T.V..... the newspaper is not well researched .... (its) one-sided....with mini-cameras you can see the news taking place...."

> "....between 1969 and 1974 it wasn't difficult to radicalize us and the daily newspaper stood out as the bulkhead of the establishment.... why read it, its only going to trash your mind."

> "You can see Republicanism in the paper.... you can feel it....for example, the paper backed Nixon to the hilt....you can even see Republicanism in the sports section....the sports editor is always behind the owners and attorneys, not the man on the bottom...."

> "....I felt like someone was lying here so why should I get myself caught up in it...it kind of makes you feel let down inside when you got into the news and put your faith in it."

In contrast to the biased and one-sided approach, which the participants felt was characteristic of the newspaper, they proposed presenting both sides of issues in an op-ed format.

"If they would present or open themselves up to people writing in or writing articles for them on other sides of issues, I think that would get me to read the paper."

"....we have (in newspapers) no point-counter-point like they have on "60 Minutes"....if they would run that in editorials with someone who is really reputable....that would be good."

Hypothesis #29: Sensationalism. Young people find newspapers exploitive and over sensational.

On the one hand, young people claim that newspapers are dull; on the other they complain about sensationalism. Due to the timing of many of the groups, the Patty Hearst story was given as a prime example.

> "Important news dealing with people's lives don't make headlines -- just murders, bombings, and of course, Patty Hearst."

> "All I wanted to know about Patty Hearst was the beginning and the end."

> "Yellow journalism is still with us. With television, you can turn to another station. With a newspaper, it stares at you as you turn the pages."

Hypothesis #30: Lack of choice.

An interesting theory advanced by one publisher and supported by some of the young people is the "lack of choice" in one newspaper towns accounts for some of the nonreaders.

Personalization and freedom of choice are both key values to this generation:

> "There's one paper and I don't like it. What's my option?"

Hypothesis #31: Lack of saliency. Newspapers fail to adequately cover areas of high interest and concern to young people, i.e., environment, entertainment, psychology, mysticism, consumerism, health (for young people), new forms of journalism, "our movies", "our concerts", "our stores", "our restaurants", "our art".

This is perhaps the area of greatest consensus. All three parties -- the industry, the experts and the young people -- recognize that most daily newspapers have failed to provide adequate coverage of the areas of concern of many young people.

The editors and publishers speak:

> "Political news, especially on a local level, is not much of an interest to young people, but the life style elements of a newspaper should offer a much higher degree of interest..."

> "The demographic profile of our readership has shifted from older to younger readers... this is because we have a new editor who is developing things of interest....particularly to young people....relating to another life style."

> "Young people have become intensely interested in activities which are not sufficiently covered by newspapers.....we need to know more about the life styles, needs and interests of young people and how they relate to newspapers."

"Do newspapers run enough columns pertaining to young adults? Are there rock music reviews, disco stories, etc...."

"When Jim Morrison or Jimi Hendricks died, most newspaper editors didn't know who they were.... newspaper editors looked at kids as having freaky, distasteful life styles. It never occurred to them -- 'that's the next generation of readers'."

The experts speak:

"There's too much tokenism and not enough attention to young people."

"Newspapers don't consider the new life styles like news -- but treat it like an occasional feature."

The young pepole speak:

"....whenever we look at the paper its about older people....we feel we are not part of the paper, so why should we bother...."

In every age group, the feeling existed that "newspapers are directed at the middle-aged and elderly segment of the population".

"....newspapers should let young people know more about what is going on for them!!!"

Hypothesis #32: Foe, not friend. As establishment oriented enterprises, some young people feel that newspapers look down upon young people, sensationalize their values and life style.

A young black social worker states this position:

> "Man, I don't read that paper. It doesn't like me, and I don't like it."

A regular reader of MS and PSYCHOLOGY TODAY:

> "I feel they are communicating with me; while the ----, the best daily newspaper around here, looks down on me."

A high school graduate:

> "I don't see no young people's section -- but they worry about the Senior Citizens."

> "I hate the features about the 'Now Generation' worst of all....sort of like we're odd-balls that people can talk about disapprovingly."

Hypothesis #33: No big issues. There are no big issues involving young people -- hence, they have less motivation to read.

Several of the members of the industry pointed to the absence of all-encompassing issues such as Vietnam, Watergate, etc., as an important reason for less reading by young people.

Most public opinion studies, including our own for TIME magazine, however, show that:

> .... Inflation is as big and often a bigger issue with young people than with older people.
>
> .... Unemployment is a more serious issue for young people than for anyone else.

Young people complain that:

> "....papers give you the statistics but don't tell you the real story about what has happened or is likely to happen when it comes to the economy."
>
> "....what paper is crusading for jobs for young people?"

Hypothesis #34: Not representative. Newspapers are not seen as representing all young people.

Among young people who do not read newspapers a major reason is lack of representation. A few examples.

A young clerk:

> "Newspapers distort the picture of the black community. There are millions of us who read publications like EBONY, play it straight -- try to live decently. All you get are stories about blacks in trouble; racial problems; a little liberal blessing -- but there's no news about my community, how we planted gardens, run a cooperative playground. You put me in the paper and I'll read it."

A young working women:

> "I'm ready for a bi-sexual paper."

A college student:

> "The local paper is not my paper. If they would put more about the campus in the paper, more students would by it. Instead you end up by choosing between a so-so college paper with limited hard news and a so-so local paper with no college news and lots of trivia about the rest of the community."

Hypothesis #35: No youth by-lines. Young people feel that they get short changed in the newspaper -- especially when it comes to columnists, departments, editorial voice, reviews and op-ed pages.

"I can't think of a single young national columnist."

"....they review every symphony orchestra -- but only list the rock concerts if they are big time."

"The youngest thing in the paper is the ads -- especially the fashions."

Hypothesis #36: Sameness. Young people have been raised in an era of rapid change -- changes in values, styles, life styles, forms of communication. In contrast to their rapidly changing lives, newspapers are seen as dull, unexciting and always the same.

Some of the editors and publishers feel that newspapers are changing a lot in their appearence, format, make-up. They refer [illegible]ix and eight columns, bolder type, large type, different layouts, the use of color.

Young people mentioned these things:

> "You know what you can expect from newspapers and what you can't. There are hardly any surprises."

> "I found an old newspaper in the cellar -- maybe ten or fifteen years old. Looked the same as the one that arrived that day."

> "The paper looks the same everyday. Same format."

Hypothesis #37: Newspapers are too news oriented, young people want more soft news.

Young people are apparently becoming less "hard news" oriented. What they are interested in is more feature coverage, as well as more commentary and discussion. There are several reasons for this change in emphasis: political disillusionment, a turning inward of interests from public affairs to personal concerns, and finally, the increasing availability of news in headline form from radio and television.

The interest in features centers around entertainment, consumer information and "how to" articles. Some other areas of interest include: science and medicine, plants and gardening, food and vitamins and fashion.

There was general agreement among editors and publishers, the experts as well as young people themselves, that newspapers ought to devote more space to feature articles. This seems to be a sentiment more strongly held in major markets where expanded TV news time has made possible the expansion of feature coverage on the TV news. On the national level, for example, the NBC network has established a nightly special feature on the evening news.

When asked to describe the general type of feature articles that would appeal to them, young people often speak of articles that are: useful, pratical or creative. When asked about specific features they would like to see, the overwhelming majority felt that an expanded arts and leisure section would the direction to take -- more and better movie reviews, record reviews, music columns, book reviews and local calendars of events.

The growing importance of leisure is a trend that has been with us for some time, however, recent demographic trends towards delayed family formation have given a sudden impetus to this trend, at least among young adults.

<u>The editors and publishers speak:</u>

> "More leisure time is a fact of life, are newspapers catering to this life style phenomenon? Do newspapers run enough columns pertaining to young adults? Are there rock music reviews, disco stories, entertainment coverage..."

> "There is a high degree of interest (in) entertainment and the arts; high consumer orientation; food and clothing; equal rights; people and personalities is such genres; money; trends, where to go..."

> "....we are going to have to put more emphasis on 'how to' articles...."

However, publishers and editors are not in universal agreement on this score. For example, one major newspaper executive commented:

> "Turning newspapers into 'daily magazines' is like throwing the baby out with the bathwater..."

The experts speak:

> "....there's not enough depth on things affecting young people....community life on the neighborhood level, schools, parks, co-ops...."

> "There is one kind of feature that is neutral, i.e., nonpolitical, which should capture kids who will read papers later -- science."

> "....to attract more young people, a newspaper should concern itself with more features."

> "Young people aren't interested in what's going on at city hall or in the state senate. They're interested in bargains at the store and listings of what's going on...."

> "Our readers read for the practical features. The muckraking is frosting on the cake.... its packaging."

The young people speak:

> "....TV every week there's something....also, there's consumer reports.... and strong editorials..."

> "....an excellent program is '60 Minutes".... they bring out things usually in an unbiased way.... they just tell it like it is...."

When it comes to suggestions for getting young readers (under 30), expanded feature sections were always at the top of the list.

> "....an expanded entertainment section would be the direction to take....could have better movie and record reviews, an intelligent music column, book reviews, maybe a serialized book...."

> "....newspapers should focus on local events, what is happening, what is going to happen as far as entertainment, also, album reviews, fashion, music, sports, science and medicine, hobbies...."

> "....cover more events of young people.... what's going on on the college campuses, more movie critiques, more features such as plants and gardening, food and recipes, vitamins and health, consumer affairs, solar energy, lobotomies...."

Hypothesis #38: Packaging. In some respects, the evaluation of a newspaper as a physical product follows the same lines as the evaluation of any product, for example: efficiency, convenience, ease of handling. On these grounds, newspapers come off badly. Young people feel that a lot could be done to improve the readability of newspapers; better indexing, more summarization and a tabloid size.

The readability of the newspaper is an area in which the opinions of young people are clearly seperate from the opinions of editors and publishers. Some young people suggest that the readability problem is due to the organization of the paper itself. They feel that newspapers are poorly organized and are in need of: better indexing, more capsule summarization and a tabloid size format which would be easier to handle.

Editors, on the other hand, see the problem as being due to the fact that young people do not read as well as previous generations.

The editors and publishers speak:

> "Young people do not know how to read comprehensively, therefore, I think they have difficulty picking up a daily newspaper to read."

> "Teachers and school administrators are not as good at reading-writing as was the generation before, and the generation before that...."

> "The national rate of illiteracy is embarrisingly high. At the same time, the level of writing and editing of most major newspapers has consciously been substantially upgraded.... have we written ourselves right over the heads of our audience?"

One editor, however, mentioned the possibility that the fault might lie in the product:

> "....perhaps a lack of structure is our problem.... young people have to search the newspaper for information and entertainment...."

Another publisher suggested that:

> "Skips, indices, anchored columns and sections are not what young people mean by 'not readable'. Our language is dull."

The young people speak:

"Newspapers should have bold caps of information that's set out....space with vital information in bold caps."

"Papers are too big.... they should be condensed, organized."

"The organization of papers should be changed, Make it easier to read because people just want to skim the paper. Make it the size of the tabloid."

"TIME magazine, where they condense a whole week in one thing....see that's better than reading a bunch of newspapers."

The experts speak:

"One major complaint that young people have about newspapers is that its difficult to find anything."

"Newspapers compete with magazines which are so much better packaged....so much easier to find your way around in."

Hypothesis #39: Appearance: Newspapers are competing in the marketplace with magazines and television news which are usually well packaged. The news magazines and the TV news have exciting color coverage of news events. Newspapers, on the other hand, are seen as maintaining their traditional format which, to young readers accustomed to rapid changes in style, is by way of contrast staid, unchanging, and dull.

A third area of relatively broad consensus, is the question of the actual appearance of newspapers. Young people perceived newspapers as unchanged and unchanging. To a generation accustomed to the colorful packaging of every product, the traditional format of newspapers is rather dull and unappealing.

The traditional appearance of newspapers ties it to traditionalism in general and supports the imagery of the newspaper as a rather stodgy middle aged medium.

The Editors and Publishers Speak:

> "Probably more than ever before, young people are going in for brighter colors, wilder designs...perhaps newspapers are just awfully dull by comparison."
>
> "...sometimes the ads in newspapers are far more interesting and appealing than the news content on the page."

"...newspapers have to take a hard look at their typography..."

The Experts Speak:

"It's a visual society, Mc Luhan is right. Magazines with bright color pictures sell, as do paperbacks that are colorful."

"What young people are looking for is an attractive, aggressive, spunky news product which is better both graphically and in terms of content."

The Young People Speak:

Perhaps the best illustration of the problem of the newspaper's appearance comes from a young man in Texas who held up a newspaper and said: "Look at it, its just a newspaper, you've seen one all your life."

"They should consider changing the graphic format -- more color."

"...Newspapers could do a lot more with the design and layout of newspapers."

"When I was a kid the Sunday paper was bigger, it had all kinds of stuff and the comics were in color...reading it was a kind of celebration..."

Hypothesis #40: Young people find the articles too long and repetitious.

Television has made brevity a necessity as well as an asset. Young people far more than the industry talk about the length of the articles, the repetition of the news, and what they call "the same old names."

The Young People Speak:

> "There are a lot of good things in the paper, but it does get repetitious."
>
> "I get tired of the same old stories about the same old people -- Nixon, Kennedy, Liz Taylor."
>
> "The same topic seems to stay in the paper for a long time, like this Patty Hearst thing. It goes on and on. The paper should have more different kinds of news."
>
> "The stories are long and boring."

Hypothesis #41: There's no fun in newspapers.

Young people suggest that they no longer want to take their hard news "straight" -- but feel that a newspaper has several different functions:

... Informative

... Useful

... Entertaining

Some of the harshest criticisms come in the last category:

> "...there's hardly anything good in the newspapers. They could call it bad news. I'd sooner listen to radio or television because reporters there make jokes and stuff. I listen to -----, and this reporter starts off by telling you 'I've got a rotten story for you'...it's more personal."

> "Thank God for Art Buchwald."

At least one publisher agrees:

> "Where it's needed, stop delivering tablets from the mount, and discuss things in a cursive way. Laugh a little, not too much, including at yourself -- come off it, sort of."

Hypothesis #42: Price is a rationalization rather than an explanation.

Price was not volunteered by any of the groups as a major reason for not reading the paper. With some young people, the question was: "Is it worth it?"

Price, however, may account for the high degree of pass along and sharing of papers -- a factor in sales if not in readership figures.

Hypothesis #43: The "alternative" papers have begun to identify the ingredients which young people want in their newspaper -- and which they don't find.

Publishers and editors of the "alternative papers" single out their explanations for the decline in daily newspaper reading among young adults:

... No big news issues
... No journalists geared to youth
... Advertising is directed at homeowners, family people
... Distribution setups
... Listings are news -- and service
... Young people are interested in people more than news events
... Newspaper language is outmoded

The results of some of the interviews with the publishers:

The publisher of a successful alternative weekly in the Northeast with a circulation of over 100,000 (half paid):

> "Our success is a question of service, i.e., we provide a useful product. Our readers read for the practical features (listings, consumer stuff). The muckraking is frosting on the cake...it's packaging."

"They read for the entertainment, not the politics. This represents a big change since the late '60's. We were very radical then (reflecting the values of the students). Now, we're liberal -- more mainstream."

"The paper has three sections: entertainment, news, and special features."

Reasons for Success:

1. The audience believes what we write
2. We serve their needs
3. We are responsive, e.g., we've changed with the times politically and we've changed graphically.

We are responsive because:

1. We're like them -- we're young, hip, etc.
2. We're small enough so that if I come in one day and say 'let's change the layout', it gets changed.
3. The staff feels it has a stake in the organization, it's not overpoweringly large.

"In 1970 the circulation was 1,000 -- it's now 100,000. It grew from 1,000 to 50,000 by 1972. (One half of the current 100,000 are also free copies to the campuses.)"

His competitor speaks up (circulation 100,000, half free):

"What sells our publication? The best selling covers are those dealing with sex. The worst selling covers are those dealing with politics."

Other reasons for our success:

1. We do things that the regular papers can't do -- use dirty words, bring a degree of reality to the paper by talking the way young people really talk.

2. We talk about motives, personality quirks... if a politician is screwed up or not, etc. e.g., the democratic candidates for president are all pretty much the same; by talking about personalities we bring some interest to the campaign.

3. We examine the private sector. Big newspapers can't compare supermarkets and other retail stores. We can -- we try to hold the private sector accountable.

4. We concentrate on life style -- more social and cultural awareness, social concerns.

5. We are more in touch with young people because we are younger.

6. Like the old Village Voice slogan: we try and 'keep ahead of the Times.'

7. Usually 8 out of 20 pages of editorial is devoted to arts.

A representative for one of the most successful weekly newspapers reaching the marketplace -- targeted at young people:

> "Our readers say it's the only paper they read. They feel we tell it like it is; no bullshit; and we see the world like they do. We have rapport, open communication. We siphon off readers from the local papers for these reasons."
>
> Downscale types get all the news they want from five minutes of television viewing or a radio broadcast. They buy our paper to find out what's happening, where to go, how to meet people, what's on, what to buy. I'll give you another example. Take the National Star, in my neighborhood I see Sicilian working class neighborhood youth waiting in line for it -- it's filled with rock and pop stars."

"Upscale types -- they're dissatisfied with the establishment bias of the regular papers -- and their not reading is not accidental, but a form of protest."

The editor and publisher of a paper published for young people in the metropolitan New York area: circulation, 50,000; major distribution outlets, music shops, boutiques, hair cutters, places frequented by young people. Major subject matter is pop music, rock, concerts, reviews.

"Young people don't like to read news. The news is not interesting. There are no big social issues like there were in the late '60's, so current news events are not of great concern to young people."

"To attract more young people, a newspaper should concern itself more with features. Youth likes to read gossip. That is why People magazine is so popular. They also like music and sports. Most young people who buy a paper often do so just to read the sports section."

"Most papers don't have journalists geared toward the youth. Instead the paper will move a reporter over to cover a particular topic of special appeal to young people, and this person is not used to handling youth-oriented material. Also, people who run the papers are not concerned with pleasing the young people."

"Advertising in newspapers is not for young people. It often appeals to homeowners, for example."

"Young people don't go to the newsstands to buy a paper. They don't feel its worth the trip. Papers should be sold in places where young people go."

VI: LIFE STYLES

Just as editors and publishers did not focus on their product when trying to explain declining readership among young people, the young adults did not generally speak focus on themselves when trying to explain the same pheonomena.

Instead, many of their values came through in their discussions of the product and its lack of relevance.

Some of the themes which emerged as the young people spoke about their interests and feelings were:

.... Interest in self and self-fulfillment
.... The importance of creativity
.... The need for novelty and change
.... Anti-bigness
.... Resentment of authority

The industry spoke about:

.... Changing life styles
.... Young people are turned off politics
.... Papers are seen as too establishment

Our major reference point, however, came from looking into our own files.

We have compiled from available data, our most current reference point on many youth values.

The reader should be forewarned that while these reflect youth (16 to 24 year old), the samples were not necessarily similar -- nor the context of the questions.

Instead they represent a portrait of youth values as we understand them to be at this point in time.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S VALUES

IN THE LAST TWO TO THREE YEARS [27/]

Welcome Value Changes

More respect for privacy*	79%
More emphasis on self-expression	78%
More emphasis on self/less on community*	77%
More emphasis on creativity*	70%
Less emphasis on money	67%
Less emphasis on competitiveness	63%
More emphasis on nature, less on convenience	62%
Less emphasis on routine*	61%
More acceptance of nonconformity	60%
More emphasis on feeling/not thinking	59%
More acceptance of sexual freedom	56%
More emphasis on traditional family structure	48%
More respect for authority	42%
Less emphasis on working hard	40%

*Not national

Hypothesis #44: Self and self-fulfillment is a major concern of young people. It manifests itself in the trend away from public concerns and the emphasis on personal concerns.

Undoubtedly the umbrella for many of the value changes and present interests of young people stems from the quest for self-knowledge, understanding, and self-fulfillment. Young people see newspapers as preoccupied with the public world, not the private world.

The industry speaks:

> "Are newspapers offering young people information relating to their lives -- their careers, life styles and interests?"

> "We don't understand young people -- much less their involvement with themselves."

> "In my day, introspection was looked down upon. Now, it is a national occupation. Witness Relaxation Response."

The young people speak:

> "I'm into mysticism -- not just because it is in -- but it enables me to learn more about myself."

"I have a good job and it pays well -- but it is not rewarding. I don't get any real sense of personal satisfaction from it."

"I guess I like a magazine such as PSYCHOLOGY TODAY, because it helps me to understand myself."

"Newspapers are too outward oriented. They want to tell you about other people."

"Everyone's trying to find themselves, you know -- get your head together. Everyone's concerned with finding out where they belong in life....as far as what's going on in the world, they're not really concerned about it...."

"Lots of kids are living life day to day and they're not thinking too much about what's going to happen in the future."

"Young people are so wrapped up in their own lives, their own problems...."

Hypothesis #45: Lack of time. A favorite hypothesis of the industry is that young people today have very many more ways of using their leisure time -- a result of mobility, affluence, delayed family responsibility.

An analysis of available Yankelovich data suggest that the reverse is the case: The most active young person is the most likely to be a newspaper reader; the least active, the least likely.

Let us look at an imaginary market[28/] where readership among young people (under 30 years of age) is at the 62% level. Here is what we find.

LEISURE TIME ACTIVITIES*

18 - 30 year olds

		Read a Newspaper Every day	Read a Newspaper 2 - 3 Times a Week	Don't read/ Read Occasionally
	%	%	%	%
Total Young Adults	100	60	20	20
Leisure Time Activities				
Going to the movies	100	70	20	10
Going to concerts, plays, etc.	100	80	20	**
Reading books	100	70	20	10
Spectator Sports	100	80	20	**
Hobbies (Handicraft/ carpentry, photo-graphics)	100	70	20	10
Yoga, TM	100	50	30	20
Shopping	100	80	20	**
Entertaining	100	70	20	10
Going out for a night's fun	100	70	20	10
Listening to stereo	100	60	20	20

* Figures are rounded since questions were not entirely comparable
**Less than 10%

Hypothesis #46: Young people lead more unstructured lives than ever before. Reading a daily newspaper, like any routine has become undesirable to many young people.

The trend away from early family formation has freed many young people to live more unstructured lives.

There was also an explicit concern voiced among a number of young people about falling into a daily routine. They did not want to read the paper every evening at seven o'clock because that was a middle-aged, old-fashioned pastime.

The young people speak:

> "A lot of people in this generation are breaking away from any kind of strong daily rountine."

> "There is almost no schedule as to what I do. Every evening I'm doing something and half of the time its outside the home. My parents generation, after dinner was over you relaxed that was it for the day."

> "I don't by the paper every day because I don't want to fall into a rountine."

Hypothesis #47: Young people don't respond to gossip stories -- or features about the "stars" and how other people live. They reject vicariously living as an essential part of their creed.

Members of the industry debate the point:

> "Look at PEOPLE magazine -- and tell me that this generation is different."

> "I know that 'people' columns are the new thing in papers -- but I still think that they appeal to the more traditional readers."

Hypothesis #48: This generation has its share of thrill seekers -- those who are constantly searching for novelty and change.

"Young people are loyal to their peers -- but not to products or brands, forms of culture, artists, programs -- unless they provide novelty and change."

-- a major advertiser

"I'd like a newspaper which was different every-day. There are no surprises in the paper -- even on Sunday."

"This town could use a new newspaper."

Hypothesis #49: Young people relate to the emotional rather than the rational.

A quote from a leading psychologist specializing in teen-age behavior:

> "This generation does not relate to the printed word for its images or experiences. Instead they respond and think in terms of sound, color, touch. The phrase 'you know' connotes a thousand words."

From Daniel Yankelovich:

> "To be natural in youthful lexicon, among other things means:
>
> ... to place sensory experiences ahead of conceptual knowledge,
>
> ... to embrace the existentialist emphasis on being rather than doing or planning,
>
> ... to express oneself nonverbally - to avoid literary and stylized forms of expression as artificial and unnatural,
>
> ... to rely on exclamations as well as silence, vibrations, and other nonverbal modes of communication,
>
> ... to embrace self-knowledge, introspection, discovery of one's natural self."

Hypothesis # 50: Newspapers are seen as too establishment.

Recent years have seen two trends in values which tend to undermine the newspapers position. First is the trend against bigness of any sort -- e.g., big government, big cars, etc. The second trend of significance is the negativism towards business.

Daily papers, to the extent that they are big businesses or represent big businesses in their ads, editorials or general point of view have alienated some younger people.

The young people speak:

> "....in the late sixties and early seventies, the daily paper stood out as the bulkhead of the conservative establishment...."

> "The newspaper is run by middle class and rich people....they control the paper, it isn't about regular people...."

> "Young people are turned off by government and big business. You can't trust what you're reading anymore."

> "The local paper has big money behind it....you can even see the Republicanism on the sports page. The sports editor is always behind the owners and the attorneys not the man on the bottom...."

"The local paper is a big syndicate....editors are puppets....reporteres are trained how to write... they're not independent...."

The experts speak:

"Newspapers are generally seen as conservative.... money-making...."

"The major newspaper is the establishment. They read our paper because they're dissatisfied with existing media."

"Newspapers have a bland bureaucratic style of writing, which sounds like something written by a big company or the government."

The editors and publishers speak:

"Perhaps young people tend to mistrust newspapers as tools of the establishment."

"Young people still regard it as pro-establishment....Watergate and investigative reporting have not changed the image."

Hypothesis #51: Young people don't read newspapers because they are disinterested in politics and world affairs.

Publishers and editors, in particular, saw young people as 'turned-off'.

The editors and publishers speak;

> "....there is a considerable lack of interest (among young people) in institutions of government, particularly at the local level."

> "....young people are turned off to reading about politics, big business and government."

> "Some of the 18 to 30 year olds are turned off by politics and government, which occupy so much newspaper space."

The experts speak:

> "They read for the entertainment not for the politics."

> "There are not big social or political issues like there were in the late sixties, so current news events are not of great concern to young people."

> "interest in politics is down among young people."

"....politics hasn't grabbed the young."

"Readership is down because of the decline of the Youth Culture era and the tighter economic conditions."

VII: IF YOU WERE A PUBLISHER, HOW WOULD YOU GET YOUNG PEOPLE TO READ THE NEWSPAPER

At the completion of the groups, we asked the young people two questions:

1. What would you do if you were a publisher to get young people to read your newspaper?

2. What do you think the newspaper of the future will be like -- or don't you think there will be newspapers as we know them by that time?

1. Suggestions

** Most often mentioned

* Next most often mentioned

** An under thirty year old section/page.

** Spread the Sunday paper out. Give us a special section everyday.

** More investigative reporting.

** More young writers/columnists/editors.

** More on records/record reviews/columns.

* More about coping with problems.

* Practical, but creative stuff .... crafts, mechanics.

** Less about crime, more about people like me, more about plain people.

More on ecology.

** Tabloid size.

What's behind and ahead of inflation.

* Money management.

How you can save some bucks.

More in-depth.

* More on current problems -- make people aware of drugs and crime in the streets.

Represent our views and interests.

Make the housewives feel as though she belongs

* More dialogue on controversial subjects.

* Compare products -- like consumer reports.

** Better entertainment listings/listings of things to do/ listings that tell you what things cost.

* Review 'our' bands and music.

Do something to solve problems -- just don't write about them.

** Make the paper different each day.

* Cover more events of young people -- what's going on on college campuses.

New movie critics who think like my generation.

More news briefs.

* Improve the appearance of the paper. Jazz it up with color.

Keep it brief.

Career counseling; get people to talk about their industries, their jobs.

Creative cooking.

Caring for house plants.

More science articles/solar energy articles.

Take stands on things like prison conditions and senior citizens.

More op-ed pages.

2. The Newspaper of the Future

Here we found real consensus:

The newspaper is here to stay.

Electronic news communication in the home seems far-far away.

The 'tailored' newspaper is on the way.

The Future?

"A kind of different magazine on your door step each day -- and you pick and choose which ones you want."

"News every day; different special sections all through the week."

"The Sunday paper spread out through the week?"

"A Newspaper of the Week Club where you take it or leave it depending on what the features will be."

"Streamlined newspapers sold in combination with your favorite magazine."

"I keep hearing about the black box, but it is a long way off."

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FOOTNOTE

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Footnote

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